

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-13 ADP-00 SS-15 NSC-10 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 AID-20 IGA-02 PRS-01 SSO-00

INRE-00 NSCE-00 L-03 /119 R

DRAFTED BY AF/C: WHSIEFKEN: LJM

6/22/73 EXT:21418

APPROVED BY AF/ DDNEWSOM

AF/C: HJCOHEN

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O R 221617 Z JUN 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

USMISSION USUN NY

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, BY, US, OAU

SUBJECT: BURUNDI AMBASSADOR CONVERSATION WITH ASST. SEC.
NEWSOM

1. BURUNDI AMB. NDABANIWE CAME IN FOR A MEETING WITH
ASST. SEC. NEWSOM CONCERNING U. S. INITIATIVES TOWARD
AFRICAN LEADERS WITH REGARD TO PROBLEMS IN BURUNDI.
HE SAID HE FELT HE WAS NOT FULLY INFORMED ON US POLICY
AND ACTIVITIES WITH REGARD TO BURUNDI AND WISHED A FULL,
FRANK AND OPEN DISCUSSION. MR. NEWSOM SAID THAT WE WERE
IN CONTACT WITH HIS GOVERNMENT THROUGH OUR EMBASSY
IN BUJUMBURA AND FELT THAT THE GRB WAS WELL INFORMED ON
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OUR POSITION. WE WOULD KEEP HIM INFORMED AND MAINTAIN FRANK AND OPEN RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.

2. THE DISCUSSION WAS VERY FRANK CONCERNING US POLICY AND FEELING WITH REGARD TO EVENTS IN BURUNDI LAST YEAR AND THE RECENTLY REPORTED EVENTS. MR. NEWSOM SAID THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND BURUNDI COULD NOT IMPROVE UNTIL THE GRB CEASED INDESCRIMINATE KILLING AND BEGAN A PROGRAM ON NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. MR. NEWSOM STATED THAT THE USG WAS APPROACHING AFRICAN LEADERS ON THE PROBLEM BECAUSE THEIR CONTINUED INACTION REFLECTED ON AFRICA AS A WHOLE. HE SAID THE GRB SHOULD SEEK OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE IF IT COULD NOT ITSELF RESOLVE THE PROBLEM.

3. IN THE CONVERSATION, MR. NEWSOM MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. HE SAID WE'RE VERY AWARE OF THE COMPLEXITY OF PROBLEMS IN BURUNDI BUT THAT DID NOT EXCUSE WHAT WAS TAKING PLACE.

B. HE SAID WE WERE AWARE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON IN BURUNDI WITH REGARD TO KILLINGS BY THE JRR AND THE ARMY. THERE WERE TOO MANY REPORTS FROM TOO MANY SOURCES FOR THEM TO BE DENIED.

C. MANY COUNTRIES IN AFRICA HAVE HAD PROBLEMS BUT ONLY BURUNDI RESORTED TO MASSIVE SLAUGHTER IN REPRISAL.

D. THE GRB MUST ADMIT THEY HAVE A PROBLEM AND QUIT DENYING WHAT HAS HAPPENED AS SUCH DENIAL ONLY SERVES TO FURTHER DISCREDIT THE GRB AND PRECLUDE ANY CONSTRUCTIVE STEPS BY IT.

E. GRB SHOULD INVITE IN OUTSIDE OBSERVERS TO HELP PREVENT OUTSIDE INCURSIONS AND TO TELL ITS SIDE OF THE STORY. HE CITED RECENT REFUSALS OF VISAS TO JOURNALISTS.

F. AFRICAN INACTION TOWARD ACTIONS SUCH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN BURUNDI ARE GIVING ALL OF AFRICA A BAD NAME IN THE US AND HURTING OUR EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA.

G. THE USG IS AND WILL CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP TO PAY ATTENTION TO BURUNDI JUST AS THEY DO TO INJUSTICE WHITE RULED SOUTHERN AFRICA FOR TO FAIL TO DO SO LESSENS THEIR CREDIBILITY AND INTEGRITY AS AFRICAN LEADERS.

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H. GENOCIDE BY ANYONE IN AFRICA IS STILL GENOCIDE AND MUST BE CONDEMNED AS SUCH BY ALL AFRICAN LEADERS.

4. COMMENT: DURING THE CONVERSATION THE BURUNDI AMBASSADOR CONTINUED TO PLACE THE BLAME FOR THE STRIFE IN BURUNDI ON FOREIGN ELEMENTS AND DISSIDENTS. HE SAID THAT THE PRESS REPORTAGE WAS ONE SIDED AND THAT WE DID

NOT UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION. THE USG POSITION WAS
CLEARLY STATED THAT WE DO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS OF
BURUNDI BUT THAT THE GRB MUST TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY
FOR WHAT IT DOES AND SEEK TO FIND A SOLUTION. THE
USG WAS NOT TRYING TO ALIENATE AFRICAN LEADERS FROM
BURUNDI BUT RATHER THAT WE FELT AFRICAN LEADERS MUST
TAKE A STAND AGAINST ALL INJUSTICE TO MAINTAIN CREDIBILITY.
THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE WOULD FAITHFULLY REPORT OUR
POSITION TO HIS GOVERNMENT. ROGERS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: collinp0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE122179
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730625/aaaajjow.tel
Line Count: 129
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: collinp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03-Oct-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <25 FEB 2002 by collinp0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 980218
Subject: BURUNDI AMBASSADOR CONVERSATION WITH ASST. SEC. NEWSOM
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, BY, US, OAU
To: ADDIS ABABA
BRUSSELS
BUJUMBURA
DAR ES SALAAM
KIGALI
KINSHASA
ROME

USUN NEW YORK

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005